

**INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN TEACHING**  
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**AN EDUCATIONAL STRATEGY IN REACHING  
MUSLIM STUDENTS IN  
SOUTHERN ASIA**

**BY**

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**Prepared for the integration of Faith and Learning Seminar**  
**held at**  
**ADVENTIST INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES**  
**Silang, Cavite, Philippines**  
**July 1993**

**150-93 Institute for Christian Teaching**  
**12501 Old Columbia Pike**  
**Silver Spring, MD 20904, USA**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The post-modern Adventist institution has been reduced in recent years into a social medium transmitting information. A study of the history of missions suggests that Education was one of the oldest form of diaconia. And also it was one of the major instruments of evangelism in the early years of Christian missions. However, this has changed over the years. This paper is an attempt to study some of the factors that can change the present trends more than understanding the causes for it.

The world is coming alive to the presence of a religious community which for centuries has been ignored. Muslims stretch from Indonesia to Tunasia. And there is a vast number even in Russia. And almost every nation on earth has on its soil a community of dedicated 'sons of Ismail' a community of dedicated believers of Allah.<sup>1</sup>

India is no exception to it. In fact it is the second largest religious group competing for supremacy. India was destined historically to be the first country of the east open to modern missionary movement. It is here that after centuries of isolation Islam and Christianity came into direct encounter again.

Other denominations have formulated approaches but Adventism in India has not yet worked out strategies for Muslim evangelism.

Although it is the closest religion to the Christian faith, yet we have not worked out ways and means to reach out to the spiritual blood brothers. Since it is difficult to mould the minds of the older folks, we are trying to develop a model for our schools that will be the base for evangelism not only to the child but through the child, the parent and at large the community.

#### **Assumptions of the study**

That true education is fundamentally redemptive and that this dimension is neglected and often ignored at least in most of the schools in the region under consideration.

#### **Overview of the Paper**

Firstly, a review of the foundations of our educational institutions from the spirit of prophecy and the Bible is reformulated.

Secondly, the context of the problem is stated.

Thirdly, the paper explains the necessity of maintaining the partnership relationship between the parent, student and the local church in the process of total restoration.

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Fourthly, a basic orientation program for the school teachers is suggested as a way to make the effectiveness of the approach adapted.

Fifthly, some of the guidelines are given for revision of Bible Text books particularly keeping the Muslim student in mind.

#### **A. FOUNDATIONS OF OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

True education is fundamentally redemptive. "In the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one, for in education as in redemption other foundation can no man lay than is laid which is Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup>

The primary reason for 'redemption' to be of fundamental importance is simple because: "The faculties of the soul, paralyzed by sin, and the mind is darkened and the will perverted. Mere information cannot transform the darkened mind and the perverted will. Only He has the power to invigorate and to restore. A perception of right, a desire for goodness exists in every heart. But against these principles there is a struggling antagonistic power. There is in nature bent to evil force unaided cannot resist. To withstand this force, to attain that ideal which in his inmost soul... He can help in but one power. That power is Christ. Co-operation with that power is man's greatest need. In ALL educational effort should not this co-operation be the highest aim? If the highest aim of education is the help the students cooperation with the power that can transform the mind and the will, then God likeness and godliness will positively be the result. True education does not begin or end in the classroom. The system of education established in Eden entered in the family. Adam was the son of God (Luke 3:38). After the fall Christ stands as the representative of the father, the connecting link between the God and man."<sup>3</sup>

How was it to be done? The book EDUCATION outlines the principles and the method. It was formally established by Samuel and had the following principles.

The pupils of these school sustained themselves by their labor in tilling the soil or in some mechanical employment.

In both the school and the home much of the teaching was oral but the youth also learned to read the Hebrew writings and the parchment rolls of the old testament scriptures were open to their study. The chief subjects of study in these school were the law of God, Sacred history, sacred music and poetry.

A spirit of devotion was cherished. Not only were the students taught the duty of prayer but they were taught how to approach their creator how to exercise faith in Him and how to understand and obey the teaching of the spirit.

These schools prove to be one of the means most effective in promoting that righteousness which "exalteth a nation." In no small degree they aided in laying the foundation of that marvelous prosperity which distinguished the reigns of David and Solomon.

.....In the early life of Solomon also are seen the result of God's method of education. The power of His wisdom, the extent of basic knowledge, the glory of his reign became the wonder of the world.<sup>4</sup>

TRUE EDUCATION does not ignore the value of scientific knowledge or literacy acquirements. But above information it values power, above power goodness, above intellectual acquirements character.

And character is a result of a constant cooperation with the power to transform. Human nature (perverted will and the darkened mind). It is clear from the pen of inspiration on the importance of redemptive dimensions to education and also the relation of character development to Education.

#### **B. THE CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM**

Despite clear cut instructions from the Spirit of Prophecy, why has our educational institutions become mere information transmitters? The answer to that question will decide how we will have to tackle the whole issue.

#### **THE INFLUENCE OF POST-MODERNISM IN OUR EDUCATION**

Post modernism has had a growing influence on critical educational studies. The term "post modernism" has been used to refer to so many different views, it is difficult to attribute essential themes to the post modern trend. But at least three ideas recur in the literature generally and specifically in post modern work in educational studies.

First, is the rejection of absolutes. Secondly, there are no sustainable norms of rationality and value, then all educational discourse it exists in this view only for the purpose of enfranchising certain group interests over others. A third idea that recurs in post-modern literature is the celebration of 'difference.'

The turn of the century came with the idea that the old pieties of the beautiful and the good has been replaced by capital, (Marx) Sex, (Freud) and Evolution, (Darwin), as the unromantic explanations of the forces driving human history.

Secularism and religious fundamentalism are two opposing forces that are constantly at war with each other especially in India. Secularism influenced by the neo-enlightenment movement has reduced religion to morality and takes a natural stand on religion. It implicitly believes that reason can give knowledge and knowledge can give us power to experience true freedom. True freedom is found in the storehouse of knowledge. God is dead and man is almost dead. There is no absolutes. We ought to celebrate difference. In the light of these ideological undercurrents of post-modernity, what ought to

be our missiological stand? Can we maintain our Biblical authority in the light of post-modernity?

The missiological dilemma is that on the one hand we are caught between neutral forces as against fundamentalist tendencies among religions. With Christian theology being in its dialogical phase with other religions, can we truly enter into a dialogue without a hidden agenda? This is the missiological challenge.

That's the overriding influence of the post modern trends. But more importantly certain fundamentalistic tendencies in the country also could be the cause for an ineffective functioning of our educational system. The BJP, one of the political parties, attempts to systematically brainwash the masses and the school children with their notion of 'Hindu state' through a biased version of the history of India in higher secondary history textbooks.

We will consider three factors that can make this change possible in reaching to the Muslim students in Southern Asia in particular. However, such approaches can be modified to suit other contexts where there are Muslim students.

## STRATEGY 1

### DEVELOPING A PARTNERSHIP RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARENTS, TEACHERS AND THE STUDENTS

One of the important factors in reaching out to the muslims could be to develop a partnership relationship between the parents, teachers and students.

The spirit of prophecy and the educators of our times clearly acknowledge the joint responsibility of education.

Ellen White states:

"The teacher should not be left to carry the burden of his work alone. He needs the sympathy the kindness the cooperation and the love of every church member."<sup>6</sup>

This can help in understanding the roles each one ought to play.

Ellen White commenting on the needs states forcefully on the need for cooperation between parents and teachers.

"When the child is old enough to be sent to school the teacher should cooperate with the parents."<sup>6</sup>

Further she also clarifies the role parents ought to play:

"But the teacher should not be expected to do the parents' work. There has been with many parents a fearful neglect of duty."<sup>7</sup>

Like Eli they failed to exercise proper restraint. She further expands the same thought where she states that in many cases the censure justly belongs to the parents. They had the first and most favorable opportunity to control and train their children when the spirit was teachable and the mind and heart were easily impressed.

There is another factor that enhances this partnership relationship. The spirit of prophecy suggests that the local church get involved in the process of building a church school. She states:

"The Lord would use the church school as an aid to the parents in educating and preparing their children for this time before us. Then let the church take child of the school work in earnest and make it what the Lord desires it to be."<sup>8</sup>

This triad relationship may be useful in preparing the soil for the gospel to enter there non-Christian homes. The responsibility resting upon parents, teachers and church members is to do their part in cooperation with God. . . Ellen White writing to parents and teachers states:

"The parents in the home and the teachers in the school should have a sympathetic understanding of another's work. They should labor together harmoniously imbued with the spirit of God striving to benefit the child physically mentally and spiritual."<sup>9</sup>

Where does the team work begin? Undoubtedly it begins in the home. The work of cooperation would begin with the father and mother themselves in the home life. The children will carry with them into the school the influence of your training. As Godly parents and godly teachers work in harmony the hearts of the children are prepared to take a deep interest in the service of others. She further points out that if the parents are so engrossed in the business of this life that they neglect the proper discipline of their children, the work of the teacher is not made very hard and trying but rendered wholly fruitless.

Furthermore the teacher's work is supplemental. In the formation of the character no influence count so much as the influence of the home. It should be the effort of parents and teachers to cooperate.

While writing these lines, Ellen White may not have conceived all the implication of the statement. In the context of the topic under consideration. How can this be practical? Is it practical? Can we ever hope within the framework of our Indian conditions ever hope to have parents as equal partners. Are the parents levels of maturity in the same level of the teachers? If not, how can we make it happen?

#### **SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS:**

For this to happen, the school staff would need to have frequent workshops and seminars on child development and character exclusively for parents. And in such workshops, the roles of the

parents and the teachers need to be explained. (But within the constraints of time and effort it seems difficult.) But maybe the local church can aid in helping the school function effectively in this restorative process. Dr. Rasi, Director of Education of the General Conference suggests a formal meeting with parents explaining the preconditions and the demands of the school.<sup>10</sup> Programs of this sort can not only build cooperation, but also bring them spiritually closer. The local church ought to play this coordinating role in transforming the children, parents and students. The home and family department, youth department and other related departments of the local church and the section can initiate this process in planning out a seminar that will bring all families together under the umbrella of child-care and development. This will lead the parent to trust in the teacher's efforts to shape the character and it can end in a mutually enriching experience.

## STRATEGY 2

### ORIENTATION WORKSHOPS FOR THE NON-CHRISTIAN TEACHERS

The teaching of forty children belonging to a single religion is a comparatively simple problem. But to teach in an Indian city school where there are representatives from a score of ethnic divisions with ethno-psychic characteristics that are as distinctive as are their physical difference. The work of the teacher is complex.

Christian teachers do not view students from their perspective. We cannot blame the teacher for it. That's the way they are trained. One example would explain the complexity of the task.

When you are talking about God, to a class where there are Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, all of them are taking the notion of God within the framework of their own cultural experience. The Hindus must be necessarily thinking of Vishnu Shiva or Brahma and the Muslim must be thinking of Allah and others in their own ways.

What is needed is an intensive orientation program for non-Christian teachers on a regular basis for over a period of two years. What is essential for the orientation program would include the following aspects:

1. The foundations of the Adventist philosophy of education is to be restated and made clear. A statement of policy is to be formulated concerning the primary purpose of our educational institution.
2. We need a general orientation in the basics of the dominant religions present in the sub-continent. The focus here should be to understand the essential difference and to have the proper attitude toward other religion. It should also explain how to deal with objections raised by the Muslim students.
3. The complex role of the teachers in a pluralistic society needs to be an exercise in depth. Here the different roles that teachers need to play are to be emphasized.

The statistical report for the Southern Asia Division for the year 1991-92 states certain figures that is of concern and reflection.<sup>11</sup>

## Statistical Report for 1991-1992

	C.I.U Central India Union	N.I.U Northern India Union	N.E.I.U Northeast India Union	S.I.U South India Union	Grand Total
<b>Schools</b>					
Elementary	33	43	20	50	146
Secondary	20	12	4	54	90
Tot. No. of Schs.	* 53	55	24	104	
					236
<b>Student Enrollment</b>					
SDA Students	3,555	1,115	1,258	4,281	10,209
Non-SDA Students	15,029	11,379	3,089	50,040	79,537
Tot. No. of Teach.	18,584	12,494	4,347	54,321	
					89,746
<b>Teachers</b>					
SDA Teachers	891	320	245	1,874	3,330
Non-SDA Teachers	205	230	37	961	1,433
Tot. No. of Teach.	1,096	550	282	2,835	4,763

\*This figure of C.I.U. include the statistics of Spicer College High School which has 694 S.D.A. students and 40 non-S.D.A. students; 87 S.D.A. teachers and 2 non-S.D.A. teachers.

- a. The number of non-SDA teachers amounts to 1433 as compared to 3300 SDA teachers.
- b. The number of non-SDA students is 79,537 as against 10,209 SDAs.

These two figures deserve our attention. If the number of non-adventist teachers is almost half the number then certainly orientation and workshops is imperative. It will be of value to our schools in upholding the primary goals of our schools.

If the number of non-SDA is more than 90% of the total strength, then the need for an adaption of the approach is of significance in the light of the specific guidelines outlined in the spirit of prophecy.

The number of Muslim students can be assumed to be more than half. In any case, it is a significant number that can be prepared and nurtured for the kingdom.



<b>STRATEGY 3</b>
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### **GUIDELINES FOR REVISION OF BIBLE TEXT BOOKS**

The set of books prescribed by the General Conference Department of Education is content-wise good for Indian. But the approach taken does not appeal to the non-Christian student's mind. The setting and the approach has to be reformulated to appeal to the Indian students. The reasons for revision are legitimate for two reasons. Firstly the present textbook format takes too much for granted. Secondly, it does not deal at the level of the students. The issues are raised rather prematurely. I can give more than one example in each of the points mentioned above.

They use the writings of Ellen White and the language is rather sometimes too hard to understand. The students are not familiar with the meanings of the words and moreover they do not deal with their level. Certain questions that are raised are premature. They are not the issues they are facing. The textbook must be culturally-relevant. Therefore it is suggested that the following guidelines be followed in the revision or origination of the Bible textbooks.

There are some general and specific points that we need to keep in mind:

1. The Christian gospel must be presented in a non-doctrinal way
2. Along with text books, workbooks are to be developed. Workbooks must keep the common points of contact as points of departure.

More specific guidelines are needed when dealing with specific religious groups among our student strength. What follows are specific guidelines suggested in the revision or origination of textbooks addressed to Muslim students. Some questions deserve our attention. What is the relationship of Christianity to other religion? Should Christianity continue to teach her message to the students of other faith. Is conversion any longer to be the goal of mission schools? How are adherents of other religions to be saved? These questions pass counter questions on our understanding of Christ, his incarnation. What is faith and salvation? In other words, What are our truth assumptions of theological reflections?

#### **A. ESTABLISHING A PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHER RELIGIONS**

There are three possible responses to the questions raised. But let us examine them and see which position is Biblical.

##### **THE EXCLUSIVE APPROACH:**

This approach holds that outside Christianity there is no salvation. This view is based on the conviction that Jesus Christ is the sole creation by which all religions are to be judged. Such a view is to be found generally found today among the members of the evangelical churches but until recent times it is more or less the traditional view of the Roman Catholics.

Origin is invariably brought out in relation to it: *extra ecclesiam nemo salvatur*: outside the church no one is saved. A particular power of exposition of the exclusivistic approach was set forth over fifty years ago by Hendrick Kraemer in preparation for the international Missionary Conference held at Tambaram in 1987. His main argument in maintaining the exclusive approach is that the event of Christ belongs to a totally different order of reality than that of other religions.<sup>12</sup>

### THE INCLUSIVE APPROACH

The inclusive approach supports the view that Salvation is found in all religions but salvation is ultimately from and through Jesus Christ. Christ is claimed aims at holding together two equally binding convictions the operations of God's grace in all great religions of the world working for salvation and the uniqueness of manifestation of grace of God in Christ which makes a universal claim to be the final way of salvation.<sup>13</sup>

Biblically, this position would base itself primarily on Luke and Acts which tend to emphasize the universal nature of Christ's saving activity. It calls attention to St. Paul's going out to another religion and particularly to the Areopagus scene:

"Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are religious. For I passed along and observed the object of your worship, I also found an altar and object of your worship. I found an altar with this inscription 'to an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you."<sup>14</sup>

Acts 17:22-23

So the question is not, can individuals be saved outside the church that they can is no longer denied but rather explicitly affirmed by the highest authority in the church; the question is: Can they be saved in and through their own convictions and no in spite of them?

The opponents of the inclusivistic theory point out that it would seem to undermine the significance of incarnation. In so emphasizing the universality of salvation the uniqueness of Christ seems to have faded somewhat into the background. Likewise, it would lessen the necessity of conversation.<sup>15</sup>

### THE PLURALISTIC APPROACH

The third approach is that of the pluralist. This can be summed up as follows: all religions are equally valid paths to the one goal: In other words, Christianity is but one way to God among the other that have appeared and are appearing in the world.

### THE ADVENTIST POSITION

There is a need for the church to officially state its position on its attitude and approach towards other religions. This will help in the formulating the (missiological) challenges more

effectively. The liberals within the church have embraced the inclusivistic stance and the conservative theologians have maintained the exclusivistic position.

"It must be admitted that the exclusivistic approach is very attractive. It proclaims clearly and unambiguously the central truth that Christianity is the one true religion, precisely because revelation and salvation are only offered to humanity in and through Jesus Christ. It is in line with what the Bible seems to proclaim clearly and what the mainstream of tradition has understood for well nigh two thousand years."

However, Brenman argues while granting all of this that it is a position severely criticized today. So what do we do? Is it necessary for us to review the missiological challenge in the light of the three approaches outlined? Would a modified inclusivist approach prove to be an advantage? Or could we maintain a balance of both inclusivism and exclusivism?

We need to reach a consensus on this fundamental question. However, I would like to state few advantages of the modified inclusivistic position.

#### THE ADVANTAGES OF A 'MODIFIED INCLUSIVISTIC' POSITION

It is possible to establish the inclusivistic stance from the Bible especially from the writings of Paul. But more importantly, we could argue that if we could use propositions of truth from other religions that are non-contradictory as our points of departure. Whereas if the exclusivistic position is maintained, then it would unacceptable.

In the light of the topic under consideration, a modified inclusivist position would be most suitable because it implicitly accepts that truth is found in other religions. This is to a large extent opens the doors of dialogue not merely for searching for common areas of agreement, but also to lead them from the known to the unknown. In the case of reaching Muslims who are close to truth than other religions. It is imperative we modify our stance and make the Muslim student feel that the Koran is an attempt to know more about the basic questions of life and lead the Muslim student to believe that the Bible is contributing to a greater understanding of it.

I have used a modified inclusivistic stance in writing the book: *Will the Brothers Meet?* The level of English is simple. I used points of commonality between Christianity and Islam for points of departure. I addressed the message of the gospel in a non-doctrinally manner. It is an introduction to the gospel. It has been reviewed by the *Adventist Muslim Review* and the *TIMES OF INDIA*, Oct. 1992 newspaper. Kenneth Holland, former editor, *Signs of the Times*, has summarized the contents of the book as follows:<sup>16</sup>

In simple language, the author traces the great controversy between Christ and Satan from Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, through 6000 years of human history, to the Second Coming of Jesus, which ushers in His everlasting Kingdom of Glory. In the process, he points to Jesus as man's only Saviour, the one who can deliver us all from

the burden of guilt and sin in the past and who gives us power to rise above anxiety and to live the spiritual life in the present.

The author has a gift for anticipating questions that arise in the reader's mind, questions that sometimes seem baffling, even unanswerable. It is this logical and satisfying progression of thought that makes this book so readable and fascinating.

Rightly so, Jesus is the Central Figure in this book. It is the assurance, freedom, and promise of eternal life through faith in Christ that comes through clearly and causes *Will the Brothers Meet?* to be eminently worthwhile.

#### TEN STEPS FOLLOWED IN THE BOOK "WILL THE BROTHERS MEET?"

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| Step One   | THE EXPERIENCE OF A HAJI AS A POINT OF DEPARTURE. It is to suggest the reader that a Heavenly Mecca awaits them and all they need to do is to follow simple instructions: It is to know how much Allah loves us and to know what it means to love him in return. |
| Step Two   | The love of God is explained with the help of two familiar stories and the origin of evil, the consequence of disobedience is outlined from both the Quran and the Bible.  |
| Step Three | The necessity of sacrifice and the rationale for it is narrated from the story of Abraham. He is characterized as the only man of his time who revived the notion of a forgotten God.  |
| Step Four  | Why did God command Abraham to offer his son as a sacrifice? The reasons are discussed and the reader is led to the need for a savior.   |
| Step Five  | Here the attention is directed toward the reader himself. Two characters are presented. One self-righteous and the other humble, seeking God's grace. The contrast is to show that the only way to appease Allah is to accept as the one who makes us righteous. |
| Step Six   | The writer takes up the duties of the Muslim and discounts them as a means of forgiveness. The narrative, a dream sequence, is an adapted version of the vision of Ellen White. It is essentially a simple version of righteousness by faith.                    |
| Step Seven | Christ is presented as the suffering lamb of Allah who is the only one who can forgive sin. An appeal, is made.  |
| Step Eight | This chapter tries to bring out the need to accept the bible as the word of Allah. It does not conclusively prove the point but it actually introduces the idea and leaves it for further study.   |
| Step Nine  | The idea that Allah laid down his life for the sins of the world is clearly brought out. The death and resurrection of Isa nabi as equally important for our forgiveness is explained. These two ideas are shown to have equal importance for our faith.         |
| Step Ten   | The story of the prodigal son is brought out in modern setting and the elder brother's reaction contrasted and the conclusion is drawn. Only the   |

forgiven is eligible for the heavenly Mecca. The self-righteous and the unrepentant cannot enter the heavenly Mecca. The brothers meet at the conclusion.

These are the ten progressive steps that author has taken in establishing a reading relationship with our spiritual friends. Since the Muslim students do not own a new testament, I decided to include passages from the New Testament that showed the power of Jesus beyond His saving grace. I have also included a few significant parables that will nurture and stimulate spiritual natures.<sup>17</sup>

## B. UNDERSTANDING THE MUSLIM WORLD VIEW

Despite the ethnic, linguistic, geographical and cultural diversity yet there is broad uniform Muslim world view. Therefore, we must attempt to understand the Muslim world view from a broader perspective than merely formulating the religious orientations. (p. 54, New Paths in Muslim Evangelism") A total understanding of peoples' way of life includes much more and an effective presentation of the message of Jesus must be based on an appeal to felt needs that pervade a Muslim total life and thought.<sup>18</sup>

What follows is a chart that compares the basics of the Christian and the Muslim's world view:<sup>19</sup>

CHART 1: Comparison of World Views

Concept	Muslim	Christian
1. Unity	Emphasis on unity in all of life	Emphasis on unity
2. Time	High respect for the past and tradition	*Orientation toward the future
3. Family	Solidarity	*Emphasis on individual
4. Peace	Harmony, integration Total way of life Internal and external  characteristic	Contentment *A segment of life Internal characteristic
5. Honor	All-important consideration	High priority
6. Status	A matter associated with wealth, family name, age	*A result of accomplishment

7. Individualism	Subordination to emphasis on group	*High regard for independence
8. Secularism	A totally unacceptable trend	*A largely acceptable trend
9. Change	An undesirable phenomenon	*A highly desirable phenomenon
10. Equality	A theoretical ideal which is not practiced	A theoretical ideal which is not practiced
11. Efficiency	A matter of little or no concern	*An imperative

\* In direct contrast to Muslim world view

CHART 2. Concepts of Religious Terminology<sup>20</sup>

Vocabulary	Muslim	Christian
1. God	Distant Merciful Capricious Vengeful Almighty	Personal Loving Concerned Judgmental Holy
2. Christ	Prophet	God
3. Bible	Revelation from God Changed, corrupted	Revelation from God Authoritative
4. Trinity	God, Mary, Jesus	Father, Son, Holy Spirit
5. Faith	Object: God and Muhammad	Object: Jesus as God
6. Sin	Shame, embarrassment Rebellion against God	Guilt Rebellion against God (primarily) and man
7. Salvation	Requirement: Faith and Works Provider: God	Requirement: Faith Provider: God in Christ Assurance
8. Sanctification	Emphasis on obedience and ritual	Emphasis on role of Holy Spirit
9. Love	Stress on family	Stress on community
10. Supernatural Powers	Belief in spirit world	Belief based on teachings of Bible

As you can see there is a clash between the world views. But we must remember that a Muslim holds on a world view very firmly. In fact it is precious and essential part of his faith.

### USING KORANIC PASSAGE AS POINTS OF CONTACT

Just as much as non-contradictory Arabic texts have an appeal to the muslim world, so also does translated Koranic texts. These texts could be used along with biblical passages to move beyond what is known. It helps the reader to quickly identify with the subject's deepest needs. If we do take a text from the Bible, he may not be used to the expressions, but if we do take a Koranic passage, we are reaching his heart because we can be sure of what he has understood. For example, the story of the fall, I have used texts form the Quran. I freely quoted passages that had reference to the origin of sin. However, we must not overdo it, for it will suggest that the Quran is more superior and equally important than the Bible. We must use it just to get their attention and then more on to the scriptural perspective.

A discussion of prayer can lead us into an explanation of the Lord's prayer. A study of pilgrimage can lead us to describe the pilgrim city and the pilgrim way from John 14:1-6. We could use the idea of fasting which is common among the muslims to introduce Isaiah 58. There could be many more points of contact other than what I have stated.

### PROPER USAGE

It is essential that in the preparation of the textbooks that we use the proper words. The Muslims have different world views, different presuppositions, and while we address these non-Christian students groups with the teachings of the Bible, it is important we use the proper words, words that will convey the meaning intended. FOR EXAMPLE: It would be better to use the expression 'Abraham's son' instead of using the word Isaac, because the Muslim students believe that Ismail was sacrificed and not Isaac.

The word God is not commonly referred to as God. They use Allah instead. And so in the book: Will the Brothers Meet?, I have used the word 'Allah' for 'God' consistently. So it is suggested to employ the word "Allah" for the word 'God' although they don't mean the same.

### USING WORDS OF ARABIC ORIGIN

If we are communicating to an Urdu speaking student, it would be necessary to alter some of their terminology to make it more relevant

and acceptable. In essence, if we drop few words of Sanskrit origin and take Arabic words instead, it will appeal to their hearts. For example, they are more used to Muhabbat than Prem; Prabu than Allah; Shanti than Itminan.<sup>21</sup>

### **USING THE PROPER NAMES FOR JESUS**

It is essential to introduce Jesus as Isa Al Masih, Ibn-e Mariam. The muslim who is well acquainted with Quran will know whom we are talking. Jesus is the center of the Christian message so it is vital that the Muslim should know about whom we are speaking. It is better to move from the known to the unknown. Such usage will give the required response.<sup>22</sup>

### **MODE OF GREETING**

While employing conversation patterns in our printed page, it would be better to use expressions of greeting such as Salam Aalemkum to which the response is Valekum as Salam; or whenever the need to God willing it is appealing to use the expression Shah Allah. It simply menas "God willing." James 4:15 shows this idea to be biblical and so Christians could use it without compromise.<sup>23</sup>

### **TITLES OF RESPECT FOR MUHAMMAD**

It is necessary to attribute respect to the leader of the Islamic faith. It may not be biblical to call him a prophet but we could use the word Sharif which means noble. In the book, Will the Brothers Meet?, I had this problem. I have used the expression 'beloved' whenever I used the word "Muhammad."

### **AVOIDANCE OF WORDS LIKE 'PIG'**

Asian Muslims tend to dislike the word 'pig' when it comes to even everyday conversations. It would be safer to avoid such a word instead we could use the word 'animal.' It was a problem for me as I was modifying the prodigal son's story, instead of 'pig sty', I used the expression cattle shed. Pig is something unclean and unacceptable. If we use it while making a spiritual point, probably, it might turn the Muslim student reader away from the sacred.



### RELIGIOUS TERMINOLOGY CLARIFIED

The Christian writer who is addressing his message to a Muslim should never assume that these religious words which are commonly used to mean the same the same to the Muslim. It certainly means something to a Muslim and something else to the Christian. So it is imperative we understood the words used by the muslims before we write for this highly sensitive group.

Take for example, 'prayer'. It is normally understood as talking and listening to God. But for the Muslim, it could be the duca, not the all-important salat or ceremonial prayer. It is advisable to use expressions like "linadcullah" (let us pray to God) or Linatlubu Wajh Allah (let us seek God's face).

Another word that is misunderstood is the word 'sin.' In the islamic understanding of sin, it is not something evil in itself. But it means only what God has declared haram (unlawful) it may be evil in certain circumstances and good in others.

Faith. (Iman) What is intended by this word as the acceptance of the Shahada (the Muslim confession of faith) so every Muslim is a believer (mumin). But faith has a larger connotation and depth in the Christian frame of reference.

Revelation. (Wahy) The word indicates the revelation of God by means of the angel Gabriel. It is therefore advisable to use the word 'revelation' in the Biblical sense when talking with the Muslims.

Garden. (meaning heaven) Jamma: This is not a temporal place but a heavenly place; heaven and the garden of Eden are synonymous to the Muslim. The fall of Adam was actually a fall from heaven to earth (i.e., that physical fall, not a spiritual or moral one). The Firdaus (Paradise) is the nearest expression if we want the Muslim to understand what we mean by heaven.

Rasul. The messengers of Christ were not Rasul in the true sense of the word but Hawariyam (apostles). The Muslim uses the word to designate someone sent by God with a special message. Christ was a Rasul in this sense.

Avoid these expressions unless you can qualify them: expressions he would not understand - They washed their clothes and made them white in the blood of the lamb (Rev. 3:14).

The filling of the Holy Spirit. (aloiimtila min ar ruh al-qud) has no meaning to the Muslim since he does not consider the Holy Spirit to be God but rather an angel of Revelation, Gabriel. Words such as 'regeneration' (tajdid), 'sanctification' (taqdis), 'justification' (tabrir) and similar words do not bear the Christian meaning for the Muslim, whereas 'fidya' (rasom redemption) and 'kaffara' (propitiation, atonement) are both understood.<sup>24</sup>

**CONCLUSION**

We have considered three critical factors that can be used in reaching Muslim students in Southern Asia Division at the secondary level. All these factors are not mutually exclusive but are equally contributing towards reaching to the Muslim students. The factor of developing a partnership relationship can play a pivotal role in making substantial change in the parents'/students' attitudes and can diminish the Muslim-Christian bias. This will make our schools effective bases for evangelism. The orientation workshops for non-Christian teachers seem imperative in the light of statistics. Understanding the guidelines stipulated for Bible textbooks are necessary to appeal to the Muslim student's mind.

These, among other factors, if implemented, can be effective in reaching to the Muslim students in the Southern Asia Division secondary schools.

## NOTES

1. Parshall, Phil. New Paths in Muslim Evangelism, p. 13
2. White, Ellen, Education, p. 30.
3. Ibid., p. 29.
4. Ibid, pp. 47, 48.
5. White, Ellen, Counsels to Parents, Teachers and Students, p. 153.
6. Ibid, p. 146.
7. Ibid, p. 91.
8. Ibid, p. 167.
9. Ibid, p. 166.
10. Discussion with Dr. Rasi, ICT Seminar, Manila, July 1993.
11. Tidings. Southern Asia Division, January 1992.
12. Brennan, John Patrick, Christian Mission in a Pluralistic Society, p. 10.
13. Ibid, p. 11
14. Ibid, p. 13.
15. Ibid, p. 15.
16. Tidings, p. 16.
17. Samraj, Edison. Will the Brothers Meet?, pp. 1-207.
18. Parshall, Phil, p. 64.
19. Ibid, p. 66.
20. Ibid, p. 74.
21. Stacey, Vivienne, Practical Lessons for Evangelism Among Muslims, p. 3.
22. Ibid., p. 2.
23. Reaching Muslims Today, p. 57.
24. Ibid, p. 56-57.